MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

18 FEBRUARY 1983

Libya, Egypt on U.S. Maneuvers

Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi announced that the United States has sent a unit of the 6th Fleet "in the direction of Libyan shores" and four AWACS aircraft to Egypt, Tripoli radio reported citing Al-Qadhdhafi's address to the General People's Congress session in Tripoli. He declared that Libya will not allow any foreign power to enter the Gulf of Sidra -- including the Soviet Union -- and asserted that Libya is forced to defend itself. An Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman earlier denied reports that the U.S. and Egyptian Air Forces are engaged in joint maneuvers but acknowledged that Egyptian pilots are being trained to operate electronic equipment installed on U.S. reconnaissance aircraft, according to MENA. The spokesman refused to comment on reports of U.S. fleet movements in the Mediterranean, MENA added.

Replying to reports regarding the presence of Libyan concentrations on the Sudanese border, Lieutenant General 'Abd Rabb an-Nabi Hafiz, chief of staff of the Egyptian Armed Forces, stated that Egypt's armed forces are ready to deter any threat to Egypt's security, MENA reported.

Egypt

Chadian President Hissein Habre will visit Cairo at the conclusion of his current visit to Sudan and will discuss the "serious situation" in Chad, MENA announced.

Palestine National Council Session

"We say no to the Reagan plan," declared George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in an address to the Palestine National Council (PNC) session in Algiers and reported by Algiers radio. Habash described the Reagan proposal, which "openly rejects" the establishment of a Palestinian state and recognition of the PLO, as a "political bomb," according to Algiers Voice of Palestine radio. He stated that the PLO must stop talking about a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation because this puts "the cart before the horse" and warned against establishing relations with Egypt before the Camp David issue has been settled, a Radio Monte Carlo report added. Habash called for deepening relations with Syria because the strength of the Palestinian revolution springs from the strength of Syria, the radio noted.

In another speech reported by Algiers radio, Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, confirmed the need to adhere to the political program and Palestine National Charter approved by the PNC's 14th session. He stressed the need to reject the Reagan plan and "all forms of trusteeship."

It has been proposed that a high-level PLO delegation "should" visit Cairo to hold talks with Egyptian leaders on the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian question, MENA disclosed citing the Cairo paper AL-AKHBAR. The paper added that the proposal will be submitted to the PNC political committee.

Syria

President Hafiz al-Asad made a "secret" visit to Moscow on 17 February and held "very important" talks with Soviet leader Yuriy Andropov, Radio Monte Carlo reported citing the London paper ASH-SHARQ AL-AWSAT.

Lebanon

Subcommittee Talks -- During 17 February meetings in Netanya the Lebanese-Israeli-U.S. subcommittees discussed security arrangements and the prevention of terrorist movements, Jerusalem radio reported. Israeli delegation head David Kimche stated that Israel welcomes the Lebanese Army's deployment in Beirut and affirmed that the purpose of Israeli military patrols in Beirut's suburbs is to prevent Palestinian infiltration into West Beirut and not to confront the Lebanese Army, according to Jerusalem and Beirut radio reports. On the issue of the deployment of Major Haddad's forces in the south, Kimche said that this is part of "security measures" and "should not influence" the negotiations, Beirut radio noted. Jerusalem radio quoted Kimche as saying that the deployment of Haddad's forces is not intended to foil the negotiations or dictate security arrangements, although Israel believes that these forces "do have a role to play in this framework."

Communist Party Leader's Death -- The Lebanese Communist Party Central Committee announced the death of party leader Niqula ash-Shawi from a heart attack on 17 February, Beirut radio reported.

Iran-Iraq Conflict

Iraqi forces killed 364 Iranians during a 16 February Iranian attack on an Iraqi brigade in the Ash-Shib area, an Iraqi military communique broadcast by Baghdad radio claimed. Iranian forces killed 46 Iraqis during fighting on the Abadan and Khorramshahr fronts, according to an Iranian military communique broadcast by Tehran radio.

An official Iraqi spokesman condemned recent Iranian shelling of Iraqi cities and warned that if the shelling continues Iraq will reply "violently," Baghdad radio announced. In another development INA, citing the Paris magazine AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, said that Syria has sent a Syrian Army division to Iran to support the Iranian "aggression" against Iraq.

Iraq

First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan concluded his visit to Turkey and signed a joint statement on promoting bilateral relations and continuing contacts, Baghdad radio reported.

FBIS DAILY REPORT

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'COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY' GROUPS REPORTEDLY CRUSHED

Jowzjan Province

LD151652 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 15 Feb 83

[Text] A group of counterrevolutionary elements who were engaged in terror, sabotage, and intimidation in (Chekchi) and Chub Bash-e Kalan villages of Sheberghan, capital of Jowzjan Province, were crushed recently by the security forces. About 13 assorted American, Chinese, and Pakistani weapons were seized from this group who had links with the so-called Jami'at-e Eslami band, in addition to documents proving their links with Afghan counterrevolutionary elements abroad.

Baghlan Province

LD162149 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 16 Feb 83

[Text] A number of inhabitants of the Jorm District, Badakhshan Province, who had been deceived by the propaganda of the enemies of the homeland and revolution and joined the ranks of counterrevolutionary elements, realized the truth of the April Revolution and joined their government and toiling people, along with their ringleader, Mohammad Yosof. They also surrendered their weapons.

According to another report, a group of rebels who were engaged in theft and robbery along the central and industrial Baghlan highway were crushed recently by the Baghlan Province Army, sarandoy, and operational battalion.

According to a spokesman from Baghlan Province, the ringleader of the band, 'Abdol Samad, was killed and another 12 members were captured.

Another report says a number of rebels, these treacherous elements to the homeland, people, and revolution, who were robbing bus passengers along the Salang highway, were captured recently by the security force of Jabalosaraj, along with their ringleader, Mohammad Sayed, an inhabitant of the Shoghol village, Salang District.

A spokesman for Parwan Province said a number of assorted weapons, a large quantity of ammunition, and incriminating documents proving their link with counterrevolutionary bands abroad were seized from these traitors.

Zabol, Konar

LD171736 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] A group of rebels, these traitors to the homeland and revolution, who were disrupting the peaceful life of the people in Jaldak District, Zabol Province, were crushed recently along with their ringleader, Taj Mohammad, by the Kandahar sarandoy command and by the troops and officers in the district.

A spokesman for Zabol Province said 15 assorted weapons and a number of pieces of equipment and documents proving their link with counterrevolutionary bands abroad were seized by the security forces.

According to another report, the day before yesterday, the sarandoy and revolution defense groups crushed a group of counterrevolutionary elements together with their leaders, Qayum Gol, in Konar-e Khas District, Konar Province. A quantity of assorted weapons and ammunition were seized from these criminals.

1,021 DETAINED DURING VIOLENCE RELEASED

BK180243 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0145 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Text] The government has released 1,021 out of the total 1,331 persons who were taken into custody throughout the country initially during the 2 days of violence in Dhaka and some other cities and town.

According to a press note issued in Dhaka last night, of the 310 persons, those who would not be identified as troublemakers after final questioning and investigation would also be released.

The press note said, in view of the circumstances, the government is expressing its sorrow for the difficulties the innocent persons and students had to undergo because of their detention. It says some misguided students and miscreants, after direct instigation and guidance of a certain section of politicians, had violated martial law and created an anarchic situation in several cities and towns of the city including on Dhaka on the 14th and 15th of this month. They held meetings, rallies, and processions, raised antigovernment objectionable and provocative slogans, set on fire government and private vehicles and buildings, destroyed various kinds of property, and created a reign of terror by disrupting normal public life. When the members of law enforcing agencies on duty tried to resist the troublemakers, they became more violent and made serious attacks on them. The Bangladesh Rifles and the Army had to be deployed to help the law enforcing agencies in bringing the situation under control.

In order to deal with the situation the law enforcing agencies were compelled to take strong measures and round up some troublemakers. Among the troublemakers, many took shelter in various educational institutions and student halls and hostels. As a result, the law enforcing agencies had to go to those educational institutions and hostels under compulsion to find out and arrest the troublemakers. Under the circumstances, a number of innocent persons and students got arrested who could not be identified during the raids. Under the government's directive, the law enforcing agencies have freed such innocent persons and students after a preliminary questioning. The government hopes that, considering the situation, all concerned would take the matter in open mind and (?good grace), the press note added.

WALL POSTERS, WRITINGS ORDERED REMOVED

BK171247 Dhaka Domestic Service in Bengali 1200 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] All posters and writings on various walls and buildings in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan areas and all other municipal areas, especially on university and educational campuses, will have to be completely removed and erased immediately by the owners of the various walls and buildings, occupants, or custodians of the respective premises. The Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan police and other local police will ensure that all concerned in their respective areas are abiding by this order. Defaulters will be severely dealt with under the law.

AFP EXAMINES NONALIGNED DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

BK171551 Hong Kong AFP in English 0739 GMT 17 Feb 83

[By Joel Henri]

[Text] New Delhi, Feb 17 (AFP) -- India has submitted what observers view as two relatively moderate economic and political draft resolutions to the 96 countries and organizations invited to next month's non-aligned summit here.

The non-aligned commissions will meet to discuss them on March 1, and their work will be submitted to the foreign ministers on March 3 and 4. The final draft resolutions will be presented to the heads of state on March 7, 9 and 11, an official Indian source said here.

Western diplomats who studied the two bulky drafts -- they contain more than 100 pages -- said they do not vilify the United States for its Latin American and Middle East policies as was the case in previous non-aligned gatherings.

The political draft urges Washington to follow "a more constructive policy for peace and dialogue" in Latin America, particularly in Nicaragua, Panama and Cuba. It emphasizes that Cuba has been subjected to a U.S. blockade for the past 22 years.

Washington's support for Israel and the Camp David accords, signed by the United States, Israel and Egypt, are not castigated as it was in the non-aligned foreign ministers' final resolution adopted in New Delhi on February 1981. The United States was then accused of supporting "Israel's aggressive policy in the Middle East."

The text voices support for the resolution adopted by Arab leaders at their summit in Fes, Morocco, last autumn. The Arab resolution implicitly recognizes Israel's right to exist and calls for the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

The Middle East and Namibia's independence will be some of the key issues discussed at the coming non-aligned summit. The Palestinian Liberation Organization and Namibia's nationalist South-West Africa People's Organization have been invited to the summit.

On Namibia, currently ruled by South Africa in defiance of United Nations resolutions, the draft condemned the "foot-dragging" by the five-nation Western contact group (the United States, Britain, France, Canada and West Germany), mandated by the U.N. Security Council to negotiate an internationally acceptable independence settlement.

But commenting on the political draft, the Indian conservative daily THE TRIBUNE said that although milder in tone than previous non-aligned resolutions, it remained "rather anti-Western" in its substance.

"Non-alignment is in fact an anti-U.S. alignment," the daily financial [as received] noted three weeks ago.

The political draft demands the return to Mauritius of the Chagos Archipelago, which includes the island of Diego Garcia, site of a major U.S. naval base.

Communist diplomatic sources said Cuba and Vietnam would try to give the draft a stronger anti-U.S. slant. But pro-Western members said they want stronger condemnation of the Soviet Union and Vietnam for their respective roles in Afghanistan and Cambodia. Neither Moscow nor Hanoi is named in the draft although both are implicitly condemned for their military interventions in Afghanistan and Cambodia.

As in the 1981 foreign ministers' resolution, the current draft calls for "the withdrawal of foreign troops, respect for the territorial integrity and independence of the two countries and self-determination for the Afghan and Cambodian peoples."

Hanoi had voiced "reservations" when the 1981 resolution was passed.

As summit president, India will try to work out a compromise on Afghanistan and Cambodia in a bid to safeguard the movement's unity and insulate it from East-West rivalry, authoritative Indian sources said.

The task will not be an easy one as the Non-aligned Coordinating Bureau in New York has so far been unable to find a consensus on the issues, the sources added.

India is meanwhile standing firm on its decision not to invite Prince Norodom Sihanouk, president of Cambodia's anti-Hanoi coalition government, to next month's summit and to leave the Cambodian seat vacant unless non-aligned members decide otherwise by consensus, which is unlikely.

The 1981 compromise resolution on Afghanistan and Cambodia is therefore likely to be endorsed again by non-aligned heads of state on March 11, Western diplomats said.

India has also circulated for consideration a three-point chapter for "the settlement of disputes among member countries based on strict adherence to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned, the inviolability of internationally recognized borders, non-interference and respect for the rights of developing nations." New Delhi hopes that the charter, if adopted, could serve as a basis for settlement of the 29-month-old Iran-Iraq war.

The political draft also strongly condemns South Africa for its apartheid policy and Israel for its invasion of Lebanon. It calls for the return of the British-held Malvinas (Falkland Islands) to Argentina, self-determination for Puerto Rico and the Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara.

France is urged to help the island of Mayotte reintegrate the Comoros Archipelago. In a 1976 referendum, the people of Mayotte had voted to remain under French rule, breaking away from the independent Comoros, a former French colony.

The draft stresses the need for world nuclear disarmament and hopes for a successful conlusion of the Madrid Conference on European Security and Cooperation.

The economic draft resolution for its part calls for a resumption of the North-South dialogue, the development of South-South exchanges and a liberalization of rules of international organizations in favor of the Third World.

It also suggests that the Bretton Woods conference, that led to the establishments of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund after World War II, be reconvened. It proposes the establishment of a world food bank with a permanent reserve of 15 million tons of grain by 1985.

GANDHI ON ASSAM SITUATION, AKALI DEMANDS

BK171627 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] The prime minister has said the electoral reverses in some states would not deter her government from pursuing policies that will strengthen the nation's unity and progress. Mrs Gandhi was addressing the Congress-I parliamentary party on the eve of the budget session in New Delhi today. In her 40-minute-long speech, she touched upon various subjects ranging from election in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the Assam situation, the nonaligned summit, and the ASIAD.

Briefing newsmen, the three secretaries of the parliamentary party -- Mr K. Lakkappa, Mr J.K. Jain, and Mr M.C. Daga -- said about 300 members were present at the meeting. The meeting paid homage to Acharya Vinoba Bhave and 10 former members who passed away recently.

Referring to the Congress-I reverses in the elections in the two southern states, Mrs Gandhi said it was mainly due to lack of active work in the constituencies, not because of any deficiency in the Congress government's policies and programs. It has been the policy to treat all sections as equal while special attention was paid to the weaker sections. This policy is being misinterpreted by interested opposition groups and news media. She said that her party always stood for the unity of the country and whatever the interested regional parties may say, the government would pursue the policies in the larger interests.

On the Delhi elections, she congratulated her party workers who achieved a success through unity and discipline. She specially appreciated the Sikhs who voted in large numbers in spite of boycott call.

Mrs Gandhi said elections in Assam are being held due to the compulsions of circumstances. Except a few groups, most of the people in Assam including minorities were in favor of the elections. She pointed out that there was no unanimity among opposition parties on amending the Constitution on this issue.

About the Akali demands, she said she saw no objection to certain religious demands, but the opinions of all concerned should be taken into account. Some opposition groups and the neighboring states feel agitated on certain other demands.

Referring to the forthcoming nonaligned summit, the prime minister said it may be difficult to steer clear on the conflicting programs. But we should concentrate on the areas of agreement such as the economic problems facing the developing countries.

PRESIDENT ADDRESSES JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

BK181029 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Excerpt] President Giani Zail Singh has warned the people against divisive and disruptive forces which are fomenting violence and weakening the national fabric. In his maiden address to the joint session of parliament at the beginning of its budget session today, the president said these forces must be fought resolutely. He pointed out that the government has taken the initiative to associate the opposition in discussions on major issues like those relating to Assam and Punjab and said this welcome trend must continue. Communal and antinational elements have been indulging in objectionable activities in many areas and these will have to be effectively curbed. Meanwhile, the tempo of development efforts all over the northeastern region has been stepped up.

The president drove in straight to Parliament House where he was received by the vice president, Mr Hidayatullah; the prime minister, Mrs Gandhi; and the speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr Balram Jakhar. He entered the central hall of parliament in procession. The president delivered his speech in Hindi. The English version of the speech was read out by Mr Hidayatullah.

Six opposition groups boycotted the president's address. The Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata, Lok Dal, Congress-J, and the Democratic Socialist Party said the boycott was in protest against the government's decisions to hold elections in Assam. Members of the Akali Dal, Longowal group, abstained to register their unhappiness over the delay in conceding their demands.

In his 30-minute long speech, the president touched on various subjects including the state of the economy, progress achieved in several spheres, and the international situation. Giani Zail Singh observed that the country can take legitimate pride in containing inflation despite widespread drought. The president stressed the need to tone up the economy, enhance production and productivity, eliminate nonproductive expenditure, and contain prices. The president said that the government was vitally concerned with the welfare of the scheduled castes and tribes and has evolved the three-pronged strategy. Giani Zail Singh noted with satisfaction that there was a surge of popular support to the family planning program.

Turning to the international situation, the president expressed concern over the escalation of foreign military incursions in the Indian Ocean, the continuing war between Iran and Iraq, the increasing recklessness of Israel, and the aggressive acts of the racist regime of South Africa. He also deplored the lack of progress in the disarmament talks and the North-South dialogue.

Referring to the developments in our neighborhood, he said the entire nation was exercised over the acquisition of sophisticated weaponry by Pakistan. He, however, hoped that the dialogue with Pakistan at various levels will eventually result in peace, friendship, and cooperation.

On the nonaligned summit beginning next month, Giani Zail Singh expressed his ardent hope that it will make an important contribution to the solution of the problems besetting the international community.

The president urged the members to approach the vital tasks before them in a spirit of cooperation and harmony. He said apart from fighting corruption and inefficiency, it must be ensured that the differences are not aired in a manner which provokes violence or weakens our secular democratic fabric.

Parliament today mourned the deaths of the former Soviet president, Leonid Brezhnev, and Acharya Vinoba Bhave. In the Rajya Sabha, the chairman, Mr Hidayatullah, paid rich tributes to the Soviet departed leader. He said the world has lost an outstanding leader in the death of Mr Brezhnev. In the Lok Sabha, the speaker, Mr Balram Jakhar, described Mr Brezhnev as a staunch friend of India.

REPORTS ON POLLING, VIOLENCE IN ASSAM

BK171619 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Excerpts] The second round of polling in Assam in 36 assembly constituencies and in some segments of 10 Lok Sabha seats ended today. The first batch of polling personnel, who went to Gauhati from outside, left by air today for Delhi after completing their election duties in the state.

The adviser to the Assam governor, Mr Subramaniam, told the All India Radio special correspondent in Dispur this evening that today's polling was by and large orderly and peaceful. There were sporadic attacks on the polling parties and incidents of snatching ballot boxes. All such attempts were foiled by prompt police action.

Police had to open fire at seven places to disperse mobs trying to disrupt the poll. Three miscreants were killed in the police firing. One policeman lost his life in a mob attack.

There will be repolling in first 73 polling booths spread over 7 constituencies where polling was adjourned on the 14th of this month. On Saturday also there will be repolling in such 136 booths spread over 6 constituencies, Mr Subramaniam added.

Referring to incidents in Goalpara, where some Assam police battalion personnel resorted to firing due to some misunderstanding, the adviser said the situation is now completely under control. Those involved in the incident are back in their camps.

Mr Subramaniam said that moderate to heavy polling was reported from several areas, while it was dull and poor in certain booths.

Curfew in Mangaldai

BK180858 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Text] In Assam, the polling in 73 booths began again today at 0730. Polling in these booths was adjourned on 14 February. Official reports in Gauhati say that the polling has been progressing smoothly. Curfew was clamped on a subdivisional town of Mangaldai in Darrang District last night following violent incidents of group clashes and arson. Police also resorted to firing at Dhola near Mangaldai to disperse an unruly mob indulging in clashes and arson.

POLICE KILL 4, INJURE 40 IN KARNATAKA TOWN

BK171557 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] In Bellary, Karnataka, four people were killed and over 40 injured when police opened fire to disperse a violent crowd. Violence continued for the second day today following an incident of alleged molestation of a girl at a police station in the town. One subinspector of police, one head constable, and three police constables have been suspended in this connection.

Dusk to dawn curfew has been imposed in the municipal limit of the town.

INA REPORTS EXPULSION OF IRANIAN REPRESENTATIVE

JN171102 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1030 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] Islamabad, 17 Feb (INA) -- Highly-placed sources here told the INA correspondent today that Khomeyni's representative in Pakistan, Agha Hasan Fadil, was expelled yesterday. The correspondent mentioned that the authorities in the township of Quetta, Baluchistan, arrested Fadil and took him by jeep to the Iranian borders.

The Pakistani authorities did not explain why Khomeyni's representative was expelled, but the INA correspondent said Fadil had insulted Pakistan's Arab friends.

BANGLADESH'S DOHA ENDS VISIT, COMMENTS ON TALKS

BK120925 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 11 Feb 83

[Text] Pakistan and Bangladesh share the same view on all international and regional issues. This was stated by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Shamsud Doha while talking to newsmen at the Islamabad Airport at the end of his 3-day visit to Pakistan. He said he held talks with Pakistani leaders on bilateral, regional, and international issues. He described the talks as fruitful.

The Bangladesh foreign minister said the two countries have decided to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations and cultural cooperation.

On his arrival in Karachi, Shamsud Doha told newsmen that the fourth meeting of the foreign secretaries of the countries of the region will be held either next month or in the beginning of April, which will finalize the date for the foreign ministers conference. Shamsud Doha left Karachi for home this afternoon.

REPORTAGE ON POLISH DEPUTY MINISTER'S VISIT

BK170411 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Olechowski called on the federal finance secretary in Islamabad yesterday and discussed with him matters of mutual interest, especially possibilities for increasing bilateral trade and setting up joint ventures. He later attended a dinner hosted in his home by the foreign secretary.

Departure for Delhi

BK171155 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1005 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] A Pakistani trade delegation has been invited to visit Poland next month to discuss possibilities of increasing the quantum of barter trade between the two countries. This was stated by the Polish vice foreign minister, Mr Olechowski, while talking to newsmen in Islamabad before leaving for Lahore today. He proposed to add some new items of both sides in the exchange of goods between the two countries. Poland plans to import 30,000 to 40,000 tons of Pakistani rice for which negotiations were being finalized.

In reply to a question, he said his country can enter in joint ventures with Pakistan in power generation projects.

After a short stay in Lahore, the Polish minister left for New Delhi.

HASHEMI-RAFSANJANI DISCUSSES WAL FAJR OPERATION

GF171058 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Text] According to a report by the Central News Unit, the Supreme Defense Council held a session last night that was chaired by Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, president and head of the Supreme Defense Council. Attending the session were Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the imam's representative on the Supreme Defense Council; Mir-Hoseyn Musavi, prime minister; Colonel Salimi, minister of defense; Velayati, minister of foreign affairs; Shamkhani, who is in charge of the Islamic revolution guards; the chief of the war propaganda department; and the secretary of the Supreme Defense Council. Matters related to the Iraqi imposed war on Iran were discussed.

At the end of the Supreme Defense Council session, Hashemi-Rafsanjani was interviewed by our correspondent on the subjects discussed.

[Begin recording] [Question] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, people have questions about the first phase of the Wal Fajr operation which now seems to be stagnating. Also, in your two recent speeches, you have said that this would be the last operation and the most decisive [word indistinct] operation. Please explain the nature of the continuation of the operation and whether any decision on this was adopted?

[Answer] In His exalted name. During the session, we spent most of our time examining the consequences of the Wal Fajr operation. Of course, we will have to hold another session because it was getting late and we could not discuss all matters related to the operation.

In this session and in the earlier session, we reviewed the achievements of the operation. The results have been very good and our plans have been implemented. However, at this stage, it is better not to disclose most things to the martyr-nurturing nation of Iran. Since the enemy might take advantage of any information disclosed, we will wait until the appropriate time to tell the nation about certain facts. Although I can presently say that this operation, as it is codenamed, has achieved initial results. We have not yet ended this operation. To keep the nation informed, we can explain the significance of this operation by saying that only a forest and a vast sandy area and [word indistinct] separated us and the Iraqi forces. The land recaptured had been occupied by the Iraqis. In the first phase of the operation, we crossed the area and recaptured the forest named (Hamghaser), moved over the sandy hills, and pushed through the enemy's frontlines. In the first assault, we destroyed the enemy's advanced defense lines in 2 major surges within 2 nights. As it has been reported, our forces passed approximately 10 or 12 obstacles, such as canals, minefields, and barbed wired areas.

Of course, they have now returned to their defense lines, but remain alert to prevent the Iraqis from sending in reinforcements. The Iraqis are being shelled and thus are unable to redeploy their forces. This primary offensive should now have been completed. As I have explained in my previous two speeches, this operation is a secret operation and will take a long time to accomplish its objective. Only a few individuals in our country are aware of the depth of the operation and this is why the enemy was caught unaware. The enemy was dumbfounded as were those in the West and the East. It has conducted all kinds of analyses and released propaganda, but we believe they are stumbling in the dark.

[Question] In the previous operations, when Iranians launched an offensive, peace missions were shuttling back and forth. However, in the latest offensive, before the arrival of any peace mission, Saddam released a communique calling for peace negotiations. What are your views on this?

[Answer] I think that now is not the time for peace missions or mediators to come here. As we have experienced before, they would have come and they would have taken advantage of the situation. But, we told them that unless we received new peace proposals, we would not receive them. And naturally, since they have no new proposals, they did not come.

The Iraqis have been pushed back. They only remain in a few areas of our territory -- a few border heights. They are now in [words indistinct]. We continue to demand reparations and the punishment of Saddam.

The peace missions must include all these points in any proposals, and then they can come here. As they have nothing to present and no one is ready and willing to come here, then Saddam must carry out the propaganda personally instead of using the peace missions.

Peace-loving, what does it mean? If they are peace-loving, they must agree to our terms and they must pay compensation. They have been in our territory for 2 years and still are in our territory in some regions and much damage has been done. They must agree to undertake the responsibilities for all damages and casualties whether human or economic, and be punished.

[Question] Although the Wal Fajr operation is in the first stages, Saddam's regime and the Western media have enlarged it more than it is and also it has been said that another Iranian offensive has been repulsed and they are talking about this repulse. Why are they enlarging this question more than it is and why have they called the offensive a defeat?

[Answer] Well, it is natural that they should do this. But, of course, they know quite well that our plan is a large one and can see that we have used a large force. Up to now, the battles have taken place on our territory. But now, the battles will not be on our territory and when the battles reach the stage of being in Iraq and create a sensitive situation it will be difficult for the Iraqis to hold out militarily, economically, or politically.

Although up to now it has not been that way, considering our position and what we have openly said, they will be able to predict what will be happening in the future. So before it happens, they have to make a fuss about it. They have been making propaganda and releasing untrue figures to bolster the spirits of some of their personnel and to pretend that they are weakening the spirits of our personnel. For Saddam, the most important thing is to keep his followers happy.

The supporters of Iraq are extremely scared, even France. They fear the future. As long as he is standing on his feet, he must protect himself and his supporters. We understand all these things and if there is an opportunity, we can analyze it to understand more.

[Question] We are witnessing movements in the region, such as the trip of the French external relations minister to Baghdad and the visit of Sudanese and Egyptian officials in Cairo and the eventual trip of Saddam to Egypt. What do you think about these trips and their relation to the Iran-Iraq war?

[Answer] Most of these questions can be understood from the last answer. It means that all of them are cursing their involvement in the war and each has his own reason. The French, as is clear from their news media, consider Iran a dangerous rival. A great proportion of the gigantic French economy is dependent on the fate of Saddam. If anything happens to endanger the French position in Iraq, they think French socialism, meaning the Socialist Party, will suffer the same fate as Saddam.

Now in France, the Socialists' competency and their political authority are under scrutiny. [Words indistinct] and have so severely depended on a very weak current whose candle of life is fading. Well, it is natural that they have panicked and their trips are meant to give them encouragement and to raise their spirits. It is also to encourage the spirits of their allies, their real allies in the region. Such maneuvering has become clear.

One of their major goals is to pressure Syria to open up the oil pipelines from Iraq to the Mediterranean via Syria so that the French can collect some of their debts and loans and somehow give some breathing space to Iraq by opening a source of income for them. As we see in the press, they say that now they cannot pay back their loans to the French. Perhaps some parts of their loans are paid by Saudi Arabia through the export of oil to them instead of Iraq. But this policy is not so easy. It has some problems and, for Saudi Arabia, risks that are not advisable.

Anyway, it is not a viable option and whatever they do is not sufficient. The French think it is better to collect from both sides. Fortunately, our Syrian brothers have handled them nicely and have stopped the French greed. The Iraqis then approached the Soviets and hoped that they could put pressure on Syria but it seems unlikely that these moves will be effective without a positive decision from the Soviet officials. Of course, by going to Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and later to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the French external relations minister wanted to create more coordination. But it is apparent that these effects will bring no results in the near future.

[Question] Iraq recently claimed that it intended to deliver a number of Iranian POW's. However, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has rejected this. What is your opinion on this offer?

[Answer] As I have said before, the Iraqis continue to lie. They tell lies just to cover up for today. For them, only today matters; tomorrow, what happens will happen. Well, they have opened a new chapter in international propaganda. They said children were taken from their mothers and we aren't concerned about mothers or they claim to have captured children. They put on the humanitarian mask, saying we want to deliver the youths. However, they lie.

We can say that if they want to deliver the POW's to France, we will never take them back. We will never permit France to gain this reputation because it supports terrorism and invaders. From the beginning, we were willing to take delivery or exchange POW's via the International Red Cross. We have in Iran hundreds of Iraqi prisoners whom we have taken to our hospitals. They were all wounded on the battlefields. They received treatment and are cured. They are mostly paralyzed and handicapped and they have occupied our hospital beds. For some time, we have been willing to exchange them through the International Red Cross.

We continue to say that the International Red Cross can come to Iran and take the POW's back to Iraq and, in turn, deliver to us the youths as they claim. We are not unwilling to make an exchange. They can hand them over to Turkey, the Internatinal Red Cross, or any other country -- but not France. There are ways to exchange POW's, which we will make clear in the future.

[Question] Another Iraqi claim is the damage inflicted on the Khark oil installation. Do you have any comment?

[Answer] This is also a lie. No damage was inflicted on our ships, ports, and oil centers. If any damage was done, we would have said so.

'This Is Our Final Offensive'

LD141222 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Feb 83

[Text] Commenting on the Wal Fajr operations today, Majlis Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanfani emphasized that the Wal Fajr operations are our final offensive. We hope to end the war. Our combatants must remain alert so that we can fulfill the promises we have given to our people and to the deprived peoples of the region. Speaking to a gathering of the educational unit of the reconstruction jihad, a number of traditional athletes from Mashhad, and personnel from the health department of Damghan, Hashemi-Rafsanjani added:

The Islamic Republic today has become a center for the oppressed people of the world. Consequently, those not satisfied with their lot have now become desperate, for they realize that if Islam triumphs in the region its impact will be immense.

The Majlis speaker then said: Since the commencement of Wal Fajr, our enemies have become so desperate that they do not know what they are doing. This is because they fail to understand what we intend to do. As a result, their propaganda has become idiotic. The Iraqi regime is insanely announcing dubious figures and statistics. For instance, it is making certain claims about our casualties. But, in fact, the figures mentioned exceed the combined numbers of our forces and theirs on the battlefronts. They also claim to have destroyed so many tanks and so many ships. It appears therefore that they are only thinking of their present situation, unconcerned about what they are going to tell their people when the day comes.

Referring to the enemy's bewilderment following the blows dealt to him during the recent operations, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: The enemy is wondering why the Islamic forces, as in their earlier offensives, are no longer launching rapid operations. The enemy is asking why our forces are not operating with lightening speed as they did during the (Fath al-Mobin) and Bayt al-Moqaddas operations. As I said earlier, the enemy doesn't know what we intend to do. However, the fact is that this is our final offensive and we do hope to end the war. Obviously, we will not concentrate our forces in one single spot in the offensive. If we deem it necessary, we will concentrate our potential wherever we decide it to be appropriate. Our nation and our combatants are both prepared for this task.

The Majlis speaker also said: Our combatants must remain alert so that we can fulfill our promises to the people and the deprived peoples of the region and establish lasting peace in the region. From the very beginning, we have stressed the need for a lasting peace. However, as long as the Iraqi Ba'th Party exists, no peace of any type can be established in the region. It is important to punish the aggressor. If we succeed in punishing Saddam, all the peoples of the world will realize that no aggression will go unpunished.

ARMED FORCES JOINT STAFF COMMUNIQUE NO 1,222

LD171738 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Feb 83

[Communique No 1,222 of Joint Staff of Armed Forces of Islamic Republic of Iran]

[Text] In His exalted name. Exchange of fire on the country's western fronts continued yesterday. Our combatants retained control over Iraqi actions and movements, set fire to an ammunition dump belonging to the Iraqi mercenaries, and killed or injured a number of infidel Saddamist soldiers.

In the Mehran region, the Gendarmerie valiants opened fire on enemy positions and in addition to destroying several positions of the Iraqi forces of blasphemy killed a number of Iraqi personnel.

During the past 24 hours in the Faqih area, a heavy battle was in progress between the warriors of Islam and mercenaries of the Zionist regime of Iraq.

In the southern operational fronts, sporadic exchanges of fire continued and at the Wal Fajr operational sector exchanges of fire were intense. On the same fronts, the triumphant and powerful warriors of Islam consolidated their defensive positions, opened heavy artillery fire on the Saddamist positions and units, and sent out patrol groups who inflicted losses and casualties on the enemy.

On the Abadan and Khorramshahr fronts, the combatants of Islam opened fire on enemy positions and units across the Arvand Rud destroying a command post, more than 15 heavy and light weapons emplacements, and 2 observation posts belonging to the aggressor Saddamists. Approximately 46 enemy soldiers were killed and Iraqi actions and movements were halted.

The city of Abadan yesterday came under savage Iraqi long-range fire, as a result of which a number of houses were destroyed.

During the past 24 hours, the self-sacrificing personnel of the Air Force neutralized the Zionist Iraqi regime's intrusions into our country's southern and western airspace by their tactical actions and use of air defense fire and repulsed intruding enemy aircraft.

[Signed] Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran

SPOKESMAN DENIES REPORT ON SEIZURE OF UAE SHIPS

GF180556 Tehran International Service in Arabic 0400 GMT 18 Feb 83

[Text] Commenting on an AP report on the seizure of 14 UAE ships by Iranian forces, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran said the report is false and fabricated. He said the report is a plot aimed at misleading world public opinion on security in the Strait of Hormuz.